COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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J. TYLER McCAULEY
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September 18, 2006

TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **HOLLYGROVE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Hollygrove Children and Family Services Foster Family Agency (Hollygrove or Agency), a Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Hollygrove, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train, and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Hollygrove is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. Hollygrove oversees a total of 14 certified foster homes in which 16 DCFS children were placed. Hollygrove is located in Los Angeles in the Third District.

DCFS pays Hollygrove a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, Hollygrove receives between $1,589 and $1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents between $624 and $790

per month, per child. DCFS paid Hollygrove approximately $360,000 for Fiscal Year 2005-06.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Hollygrove was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated Hollygrove's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether Hollygrove received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child, and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed Hollygrove's staff, the children, and the foster parents. We also visited a number of certified foster homes.

Results of Review

Overall, Hollygrove provided the services required by the County contract. The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations, and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, Hollygrove maintained the appropriate staffing levels, and the social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by the CDSS Title 22 regulations.

The Agency did not always complete Needs and Services Plans (Plans) or Quarterly Reports in compliance with the County contract. For example, two of three Plans did not address the children's ability to manage their own money as required by the County contract. In addition, all three Plans did not contain documentation that the children's DCFS social workers or foster parents participated in the development of the Plans.

The Agency also did not always detect potentially unsafe conditions at the foster homes during their regularly scheduled visits. The written disaster plan for one of two homes visited did not include a means of escape from the second story of the home. The kitchen knives in the second home were not in a secured location as required by the County contract.

The details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

Review of Report

On August 22, 2006, we discussed our report with Hollygrove who agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Hollygrove management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Hollygrove for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Trish Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Dr. Sandra Lyons-Rowe, Administrator, Hollygrove Foster Family Agency
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006
HOLLYGROVE CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Hollygrove Children and Family Services Foster Family Agency (Hollygrove or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations.

Verification

We visited two of the fourteen Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Hollygrove billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in December 2005 and January 2006, and interviewed the three foster parents and three children placed in the two homes. We also reviewed case files and the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

The foster parents stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations, and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. Hollygrove also ensured their social workers visited children weekly during the first 90 days of placement and bi-weekly thereafter as required by the County contract.

Hollygrove needs to ensure foster homes lock knives as required by the County contract, and have written disaster plans that include a means of exiting in case of emergency. Hollygrove also needs to ensure Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required by the County contract. In addition, the Agency needs to ensure foster parents' certification files contain all the information required by the County contract.

Foster Home Visitations

- One (50%) of two homes visited did not lock knives as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, the other home's written disaster plan did not include a means of exiting from the second story of the home in case of an emergency as required by the County contract.

Foster Parent Certification

- One (33%) of three foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain documentation of a valid driver's license as required by the County contract. We verified during the home visit that the foster parent did have a valid driver's license.

- Three (100%) of three foster parent certification files reviewed contained expired First Aid/CPR certificates. The certificates had expired two months prior to our review. Prior to the issuance of this report, the foster parents attended training and had their certificates renewed.

Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports

- All three Needs and Services Plans reviewed contained long and short term goals that were not specific, measurable and time-limited. The County contract and Title 22 regulations require Hollygrove to develop Needs and Services Plans that contain long and short term goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, and time-limited.

- Two (66%) of three children's Needs and Services Plans, did not include a discussion of the children's ability to manage money as required by the County contract.

- Two (66%) of three Needs and Services Plans reviewed were not updated in accordance with requirements in the County contract and Title 22 regulations. For example, one of the children's Plans indicated that the child's academic progress was not satisfactory in the two most recent updates. However, the Plan was not modified to address the academic deficiency. The County contract and Title 22 regulations require that the six month updates to a child's Needs and Services Plan includes a discussion of the need for modification of services provided for the child.

- One (20%) of five children taking psychotropic medication did not have the medication incorporated into his Needs and Services Plan as required by the County contract.

- All three Needs and Services Plans reviewed did not contain documentation that the children, their DCFS social worker or the foster parents were offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the Needs and Services Plans as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.

- All three Needs and Services Plans reviewed did not contain the signature of the children's DCFS social worker indicating the social worker's approval of the Needs and Services Plans as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.

- All three Quarterly Reports reviewed did not address all the elements required by the County contract. These three Quarterly Reports did not include a discussion of the children's adjustment to the placement, progress made towards short and long term

goals, or a reassessment of unmet needs and efforts made to meet those needs. In addition, one of the three reports reviewed, for a child 14 years old, did not contain a copy of the child's emancipation preparation contract as required by the County contract.

- Two most current Quarterly Reports issued for one child were not submitted to the child's DCFS social worker within ten days following the end of the quarter as required by the County contract. The two Quarterly Reports were submitted on average twenty-five days late. Two additional Quarterly Reports reviewed that were issued to other children did not contain the dates they were submitted to the DCFS social workers for review. Therefore, we could not determine if they were submitted within the timeframes specified in the County contract.

Recommendations

Hollygrove management:

1. **Ensure that foster homes lock knives as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.**

2. **Ensure that foster homes' written disaster plans include a means of exiting from the home in case of an emergency.**

3. **Ensure that documentation of a current driver's license and First Aid/CPR certification is maintained for foster parents.**

4. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans contain all the information required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.**

5. **Ensure that children, their DCFS social worker, and foster parents are offered the opportunity to participate in the development of Needs and Services Plans.**

6. **Ensure that the DCFS social worker gives written approval of childrens' Needs and Services Plans prior to implementing the Plans.**

7. **Ensure that Quarterly Reports contain all the information required by the County contract, and are submitted to the DCFS social worker within the timeframes specified in the County contract.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

To determine whether the program participants received the services that Hollygrove billed DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed three children placed in two Hollygrove certified foster homes and three foster parents to confirm the services Hollygrove billed to DCFS.

Results

Overall, the foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from Hollygrove met their expectations, and their assigned social workers visited them regularly. The children interviewed also stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Hollygrove's social workers' case loads do not exceed fifteen placements, and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed one of Hollygrove's program manager and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for December 2005 and January 2006.

Results

Hollygrove's supervising social worker carried one case, and supervised one social worker who maintained an average caseload of 15 cases during December 2005 and January 2006.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Hollygrove's staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In

addition, determine whether Hollygrove conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff, and provided ongoing training and performance evaluations to staff.

Verification

We interviewed Hollygrove's program manager. In addition, we reviewed employees' personnel files for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training, and performance evaluations.

Results

Hollygrove's director, supervising social worker, and social worker possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, the Agency completed hiring clearances for staff assigned to the County contract, and provided ongoing training and performance evaluations for the employees.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

August 23, 2006

TO: Mayor Michael Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zen Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: Peggy Gregg, M.A.
Clinical Director, Hollygrove/EMQ Foster Family Agency

SUBJECT: Hollygrove/EMQ Contract Compliance Corrective Action Plan

1) **Findings:** Three of three foster parent did not have current First Aid and CPR certified in their file. All three foster parent's certified expired in February 2006.

   Recommendation: Ensure all foster parent who provide routine care and supervision to the child in their home have current training in first aid and CPR and provide proof for the agency file.

   Corrective Action Plan: The three foster parents have current certification in their file. All foster parent files have been audited for compliance for current CPR and First Aid Certification. Hollygrove's Clinical Program Manager is a Certified CPR/First Aid instructor and will provide ongoing training both in Spanish and English.

2) **Findings:** One of two foster parents did not have a valid driver's license on file.

   Recommendations: Ensure all foster parents providing transportation and those who are designated drivers to the foster child, have current driving license and provide proof to the agency and placed in their file.

   Corrective Action Plan: A copy of the driving license was in the office but not

filed. The administrative assistance has since audited each file for compliance to this finding and will continue Quarterly Audits of each foster parent file as well as flag the experienced date on computer tracking system.

3) **Findings:** One foster home did not have means of escape from the second story.

   Recommendations: Ensure each foster parent has on file a current disaster plan including means of exiting from the second story.

   Corrective Action Plan: Hollygrove will provide the funds to acquire a non flammable escape ladder for this foster parent. Each foster parents disaster plan will be posted with accurate and up to date information.

4) **Findings:** In one foster home, knives were not locked away.

   Recommendations: Ensure all knives are stored and locked in an inaccessible location and away from placed child.

   Corrective Action Plan: Agency Social worker will conducts monthly quality assurance home checks to ensure compliance and safety is adhered to. A copy of each home inspection is filed in each foster parent file.

5) **Findings:** All three Needs and Services Plans reviewed had goals that contained some but not all of the four required elements.

   Recommendations: Ensure all Needs and Services Plans include long and short term treatment goals that treat the identified needs of the placed child and are specific, measurable, attainable and time-limited.

   Corrective Action Plan: Hollygrove has modified the format for the Needs and Services Plan to include all treatment goals which are specific tot h child and are measurable, attainable and time-limited. No report will be sent out until it is read and approved by the Clinical Program Manager.

6) **Findings:** Two of the three Needs and Services plans did not discuss the need for modification of the plan during quarterly updates.

   Recommendations: Ensure all Needs and Services Plan include an acknowledgement for the need for modification of services.

   Corrective Action Plan: Hollygrove has modified the format for the Needs and Services Plan to include an acknowledgement of needed modification of services

for the placed child. It is important to note, that some goals may remain the same and others modified accordingly.

7) **Findings:** There was no indication in either the case file of the Needs and Services Plan themselves that the child, their county social worker, or foster parent were offered the opportunity to participate in the development and or modification of the Needs and Services Plans.

   Recommendation: Ensure all parties involved with the placed child be involved in the development of the Needs and Service Plan.

   Corrective Action Plan: The Agency Social Worker will document that each Party was offered the opportunity will be documentation in the case note of each placed child.

8) **Findings:** One child was prescribed psychotropic medication but it was not incorporated into the treatment plan.

   Recommendation: Ensure the agency social worker includes all necessary and prescribed medication needs within the treatment plan.

   Corrective Action Plan: The Hollygrove Needs and Services report format has been modified to include Mental Health and Psychiatric medication report will be read and approved by the Clinical Program Manager prior to submission to the CSW and attorney.

9) **Findings:** Two children's Quarterly Reports were not dated by the agency Social Worker not the supervisor. It was difficult to ascertain if the reports were mailed by the 10th business day

   Recommendations: Ensure a signed Quarterly Report of each child placed is submitted to the CSW by the 10th business day following the end of each quarter from the date the child was placed.

   Corrective Action Plan: Hollygrove will create a tracking system to ensure all required and necessary reports be submitted to the CSW in a timely manner.

10) **Findings:** None of the Quarterly Reports contained reassessment of the adjustment to home, school or environment. No discussion of progress towards short and long term goals were indicated either.

    Recommendations: Ensure all reports include reassessment to the adjustment to home, school, peers, short and long term goals. Also included will be updates of

Emancipation preparation Contracts and mention of unmet needs and modification of the treatment plan.

Corrective Action Plan: Hollygrove report format has been modified to include all required and necessary elements in order to address all areas in a placed child's placement. All social workers will be trained in report writing as well as review of the policies and procedures for agency social workers report writing expectations.

Respectfully Submitted.

Peggy Gregg

Peggy Gregg M.A.
Clinical Director